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INSIDE THE BELTWAY

Who's No. 2?

By naming Deputy CIA Director Robert Gates to succeed outgoing CIA Director William Casey, the White House has opened up the No. 2 post. That position, like the director's job, requires Senate confirmation. Presidential spokesman Dan Howard said yesterday the White House is taking "one step at a time." He said there were no immediate plans to name a successor to Mr. Gates, who has held the deputy director's job since last spring.

Speculation on who will get the No. 2 post has focused on the four deputy CIA section directors, with operations chief Clair George also mentioned. Since Mr. Gates is a career analyst with no clandestine experience, Mr. George, a former Beirut station chief and longtime covert operative, would provide a proper balance at the top of the agency, insiders say. Other possible candidates include Deputy Director for Intelligence Richard J. Kerr, a close associate of Mr. Gates; Deputy Director for Science and Technology R. E. "Evan" Hineman; and Deputy Director for Administration William F. Donnelly.